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ENG 3806-001: English Romantic Literature

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English 3806: English Romantic Literature

Fall 1998

Professor R. L. Beebe

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Phone:	(O) 581-5013	M, W, -- 10:15-12:30
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Homepage:	www.ux1.eiu.edu/~cfrlb	& by appointment

Course Web Site: www.eiu.edu/~romantic**Texts**

- Mellor, Anne and Richard Matlak. *British Literature, 1780-1830*. Harcourt Brace, 1996.
- Hays, Mary. *The Victim of Prejudice*. Ed. Eleanor Ty. Broadview Press, 1994.
- Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein; or The Modern Prometheus*.
- Austen, Jane. *Pride and Prejudice*.

Goals. This course has three primary goals. The first goal is to read critically and widely from representative figures of the English Romantic period (ca. 1780-1830). Proceeding from this first goal, the second aim is to work toward some definition of the term "romanticism" (how is the term useful? how is it misleading? what are its central tenets or competing ideas? how has the term influenced our own time?). By realizing the difficulty of this second goal (as well as the need to attempt it), you should leave the class better prepared – and encouraged – to read those many writers not on our list but still important for the time.

The third aim of the course is the broadest, most practical, and probably the most difficult goal: to become more sophisticated and critical readers of poetry and its various modes. We will be reading other genres, of course; however, some of the most challenging and captivating reading in this course lies in the poetry.

Requirements.

	<u>Points</u>
• 1 Poetry Explication (3-4 pages)	100
• 2 Major Papers (5-8 pages)	250 (@ 125)
• Final exam (comprehensive)	150
• Group Report	100
• Response Papers	100
• Participation	200
• Romantic Forum	100
Total Points:	1000

You must complete the two major papers, the poetry explication, and the final exam to complete the course. Failure to complete any one of these four components represents incomplete work for the semester and any one with incomplete work will not receive a passing grade for the course – however masterfully he or she has completed the other components.

Course Participation. This is not a lecture course. The format of the course and its overall success depend upon your active and informed contributions. The response papers and the group report will allow you a couple of “formal” ways to guide and participate in class discussion. But since this class will cover material that most of you will be reading for the first time, I expect that you will come to class with lots of questions. Note that 200 points (20% of your final grade) will be determined by your participation and another 100 by your participation in the Romantic Forum (see below), which means that one-third of your grade will be up to you and how much you want to participate in the course’s various conversations.

Papers. You will write one poetry explication (3-4 pages) and two major (5-8 pages or 1200 to 1800 words). Please note when the due dates for these assignments. I will handout an assignment sheet for the poetry explication very soon. For the two major papers, I will also hand out a list of possible topics to give you some ideas, although I’m quite flexible about the topics you decide upon or the methodologies you employ. Generally, I expect your papers to advocate and to develop some kind of reading of a text or group of texts. You may have a reading of a text that goes against how the rest of the class reads that text. In this scenario, your paper is your chance to outline and make your case for this contrary reading. You might want to read some additional works by a writer on the reading list and write a paper that investigates how these other texts help us understand – or further complicate – this writer. Of course, there are other possibilities, too. For instance, if you are an education major, you might want to prepare some kind of lesson plan based on a poem or group of poems. Or if you are interested in politics or history or art, you could easily direct your paper more toward those contexts.

Feel free to do outside research for your papers, though it is not a requirement that you review other interpretations. In fact, in most cases you will probably want to rely mostly on your own responses, your own questions or dilemmas.

If you want to try something really ambitious or beyond the boundaries of the syllabus, you should talk to me first. In fact, about a week or so before each paper, you will submit a proposal, outlining your idea (or ideas) for your paper. That’s also a good time to consult with me individually about any concerns you have about the topic or writing in general. I will not grade these proposals; they’re simply a way to force you to commit your ideas to paper and to allow me to help you at that early stage of writing. The proposals will count toward your participation grade.

The only restriction on your papers is that at least one of your papers must cover two writers from the period we are reading. There a number of ways to do this and I will be happy to help you discover some of them.

Revisions. You may revise the poetry explication and the first major paper for a better grade. However, you must speak with me prior to submitting the revision. I will not accept it otherwise. You cannot revise the response papers.

Late Papers. Papers are due on the dates indicated. Papers turned in after the due date will be penalized one-third of a grade for each calendar day they are late—unless you have already made arrangements with me prior to the due date. Although I encourage you to turn in your paper in class, you have until 4:30 p.m. on the due date to hand in your paper (either to me in my office or in my mailbox, 308 Coleman). In other words, I want you to be in class that day whether or not you have your paper fully completed.

Response Papers. To help focus class discussion, I will frequently give a study question or two for an upcoming reading assignment, and I will ask the class to prepare written responses that will be read in class and also turned in. These responses should be 1-2 typed pages in length and should take only a few minutes to read. The questions will usually be specific, so the responses need to be equally specific and detailed. In other words, get to the point quickly and argue vigorously.

I will not evaluate these short papers in the same way I will your major papers. I'm more concerned that you are honestly trying to answer the question, at least struggle with it, than in your overall organization, sentence structure, and other stylistic issues that you will need to worry about in the longer, more polished papers. I will, however, assign a grade of either "Satisfactory" or "Unsatisfactory" on the response paper. Satisfactory responses make a genuine effort to answer the question and show that you have read the text and thought about the issue carefully. Unsatisfactory responses are those that are either too brief to have competently developed an answer—even though the response may have answered the question—or are way off task or irrelevant.

Response papers cannot be made up or turned in after class. Papers turned in late or not at all are automatically "Unsatisfactory." If you know you will not be in class to turn yours in, make arrangements to have someone else turn it in for you.

Web Site & Romantic Forum. The course web site is <www.eiu.edu/~romantic> which, in addition to course materials, contains links to useful sites that pertain to romanticism and literature. I will be mentioning some of these from time to time but I encourage you to make use of the Internet as you do the assigned readings and develop your paper topics.

One feature of the web site is a webboard called the "Romantic Forum," which will allow us to continue our in-class discussions outside of the classroom. Each week a new poem or prose passage will be posted on the web site. You will need to read the poem or passage and respond to it—or to someone else's response. The other section of this course will also be contributing to the webboard, so it should make for a dynamic, useful interchange. You will need to do two responses per week, beginning the second week of class (August 31st). I'll provide more information about this in class.

Attendance Policy. You need to be in class all the time. I generally allow up to three absences, whether excused or unexcused. Each absence after that will lower your final grade by 50 points per absence (for example, if you have five absences your total number of points would be reduced by 100 points). Seven or more absences will result in a failing grade.

Students with Disabilities. If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic

accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

Reading Schedule. Be prepared to discuss the following works on the date indicated. We may not be able to discuss in class each assigned text; however, you will be expected to have read and be familiar with all the assigned selections unless I indicate otherwise. Although we will try to keep to schedule, modifications are bound to occur, which I will always announce in class. It is your responsibility, however, to keep aware of any changes—especially if you are absent from class.

"a necessary . . . condition for a competent reader of poetry remains—
what it has always been—a keen eye for the obvious."

August

- 24) Introduction to course
- 26) J. Keats, "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (1297-98)
- 28) W. Wordsworth, "She was a Phantom of My Delight" (593); Keats, "Bright Star" (1311-12)
- 31) P. Shelley, "Ozymandias" (1066)

September

- 2) Wordsworth, "The World is Too Much with Us, Late and Soon" (596);
"Tintern Abbey" 571-73); Poetry Explication Assignment
- 4) "Tintern Abbey"
- 7) No Class -- Labor Day
- 9) Historical & Cultural Contexts 1: "French Revolution" (9-12)
 - E. Burke (13-19)
 - M. Wollstonecraft (20-24)
 - T. Paine (25-28)
- 11) Historical & Cultural Contexts 2: "The Rights of Woman" (31-33)
 - C. Macaulay (34-5)
 - M. Hays (36-41)
 - R. Polwhele (42-44)
 - M. Wollstonecraft (366-69; 369-70; 371-73; 379-88)
- 14) William Blake (272-76), All Religions Are One (277), There is no natural religion (a)
and There is no natural religion (b) (276-77)
- 16) The Book of Thel (284-86)
- 18) Marriage of Heaven and Hell (287-94); Poetry Explication Due

- 21) from Songs of Innocence (277-84); from Songs of Experience (299-304)
 23) Visions of the Daughters of Albion (294-99)
 25) Historical & Cultural Contexts 3: "Aesthetic Theory and Literary Criticism" (Part 1)

Sensibility & Literary Criticism:

- A. Smith (141-43)
- M. Wollstonecraft (144-45)
- M. Wollstonecraft (426-29)
- C. Reeve (152-56)

- 28) Mary Hays, The Victim of Prejudice (Part 1)
 30) Victim of Prejudice (Part II)

October

- 2) Victim of Prejudice; J. Austen (766-69)
- 5) Austen, Pride and Prejudice
 7) Pride and Prejudice
 9) No Class - Jane Austen Conference
- 12) Austen, Pride and Prejudice; Paper Proposal Due
 14) Historical & Cultural Contexts 4: "Aesthetic Theory and Literary Criticism" (Part 2)
 Sympathy, Sublime, and the Picturesque
- E. Burke (134-37)
 - W. Gilpin (138-40)
 - S. Coleridge (748-55)
 - W. Wordsworth (573-81)
- 16) W. Wordsworth (560-63), Lyrical Ballads
- "Simon Lee" (564-66)
 - "We Are Seven" (566)
 - "Lines Written In Early Spring" (567)
 - "Expostulation and Reply" (571)
 - "The Tables Turned" (571)
 - "The Thorn" (567-70)
- 19) "Resolution and Independence" (593-95)
 21) The Wanderer (Preface; Book First 608-21)
 23) No Class - Fall Break
- 26) The Wanderer; Paper 2 Due
 28) Historical & Cultural Contexts 5: "Imagination and Its Discontents"
- T. DeQuincey, Confessions of an English Opium Eater (847-48; 848-52; 853-65)
 - S. Coleridge, "The Pains of Sleep"
 - Byron, "Darkness" (919)
- 30) Coleridge (680-83), "The Eolian Harp" (760); "Dejection: An Ode" (711-13)

November

- 2) "Kubla Khan" (729-30)
- 4) The Rime of the Ancient Mariner (734-43)
- 6) Rime
- 9) Christabel (721-29)
- 11) P. Shelley, The Cenci, Acts 1-3 (1066-85)
- 13) The Cenci, Acts 4-5 (1085-1101); **Paper Proposal Due**
- 16) Historical & Cultural Contexts 6: "Science and Nature" (105-09)
 - D. Hartley (112-13)
 - F. Burney (114-18)
 - C. Lyell (121-23)
- 18) M. Shelley, Frankenstein
- 20) Frankenstein

November 23-27 No Class -- Thanksgiving Recess

- 30) Keats, Letters (selections) TBA; John Gibson Lockhart "On the Cockney School of Poetry" (159-61)

December

- 2) Keats, The Eve of St. Agnes (1279-84)
- 4) The Eve of St. Agnes
- 7) TBA
- 9) TBA & Review for Final Exam; **Paper 3 Due**
- 11) TBA & Review for Final Exam

Final Exam: Thursday, Dec. 17th 8:00-10:00 a.m.